



U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Hearing

China's Religious Freedom Violations: Domestic Repression and Malign Influence Abroad

Opening Remarks as prepared for delivery

Frank Wolf, USCIRF Commissioner

Thank you, Vice Chair Cooper.

China is indeed one of the worst religious freedom violators in the world today. Its religious repression has severely impacted many religious groups inside China as well as those that are overseas.

This precious freedom is also under attack in Hong Kong—a city that was once a free and prosperous international financial center with a “high degree of autonomy” and civil liberties under the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Today, the Chinese government has broken its promises and is eviscerating the rule of law and civil liberties in Hong Kong. Religious freedom as a fundamental right will inevitably suffer as well. In fact, the Chinese government's latest victim is the

90-year-old Cardinal Joseph Zen, a tireless religious freedom advocate for underground Catholics in China.

I am gravely concerned that the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities will use the infamous National Security Law to target Cardinal Zen and other religious leaders and communities who have participated in democracy protests in Hong Kong. We must speak out against this injustice.

I am also greatly concerned about China's malign foreign influence here in the United States—most insidiously through its lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill. I am very disappointed that some former Members of Congress have decided to work as agents to lobby for the Chinese government and its state-owned enterprises, such as Hikvision and iFlytek, that are under suspicion of complicity in the government's persecution of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Their involvement in such efforts is simply outrageous.

We must address the rapidly deteriorating religious freedom situation in China, and we must counter the Chinese Communist Party government's increasing malign influence and transnational repression overseas.

With that, I will now turn the floor back to Chair Turkel.